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## Women and Advertising

The subject of women and advertising is one that has drawn more attention from women in recent years. There are many reasons why we should become aware of the way women are portrayed in advertising. Not the least of these is the fact that studies have shown that the way women are portrayed in the media—this, of course, includes advertising—can have an influence on the way women perceive themselves and act as well as how others look at them.

One of the ideas which advertising stresses is that a woman's worth is in her appearance. That, of course, must be beautiful, slim, young and white. Older women, when portrayed, are usually shown as demented housewives who should be treated with derision and contempt.

When women are portrayed in ads with men they are usually pictured as passive and vulnerable or as beautiful playmates. Often the woman will be in a position of begging for attention, a suggestive or dangerous position or merely a playmate enhancing the action.

Advertising often exploits female sexuality. Women are usually shown as being passive and vulnerable while the image of masculinity is often brutal, aggressive and weaponlike. (I might point out here that men, as well as women, have been victimized by the stereotypes portrayed in much advertising.)

Some other recent trends in advertising are the images of women being abused—implication: Women deserve abuse. Another escalating trend is that of battered, mutilated and murdered women.

In short, much advertising underscores a very rigid viewpoint of femininity and masculinity—women are valued for their appearance and as playthings. Sex role stereotyping is very common in advertising: woman's place is still in the home, women are still dependent on men, women still do not make independent and important

decisions and women view themselves and are viewed by others as sex objects. One researcher states that advertising as a whole gives women two roles: to attract and marry a man and then to serve him in the role of housewife and mother.

In this issue we will look at a comparison of advertising in the various media, examine ads in one women's magazine over a period of years, look at medical advertising and study the effects of advertising on Third World women. There is an article about helping our children see beyond the stereotypes of ads and suggestions of ways to work at changing the situation. We've included an annotated bibliography of important resources and a listing of groups which are working on this problem. I hope that this issue will be helpful to our readers—both as education and as action, whether personal or corporate.—*Ellen Shenk*

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"Your hair is a mousy bun? You need to cut and dye and blow dry. To say nothing of condition. Your hands show evidence of your daily work load? Don't cut down on work—instead use cream and file and paint and polish. Your children's shirts aren't as white as snow? Then get down on your knees, women, and toil with that detergent. But smile all the while. And if at all there is a

slight backache, why there's the balm. Yes, there's the rub. —Prabha Krishnan, in *Today*, journal of the YWCA of India.

- Too bad the baby can't talk. She might be able to tell Playtex just how much "like mother" she thinks a plastic nipple is.
- What can one say about the ad at upper right?
- In her article Melissa Miller interprets the subliminal

message of the Ritz cigarette ad.

- Beauty sets women against one another — in their common quest for men, of course! (bottom left)

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by Melissa Miller

## Comparing Ads in Several Media

I undertook the task of critiquing ads in various media with mixed feelings. The subtle effects of advertising had long interested me and I welcomed the opportunity to delve further into this. At the same time I get angry at the manipulation of advertising. I recall the feeling of relief when a traveller newly returned from Nicaragua reported that that country had outlawed the use of women's bodies to sell products.

"If they want to sell tires," she remarked, "they use pictures of tires." How wonderful that would be, I thought. So I knew that if I systematically attended to advertising, with its caricatures of humans and their relationships, I would feel disheartened.

I ventured forth with some trepidation, sampling a news magazine, a women's magazine, television and radio. The early birth of my son precluded further forays into media such as Christian magazines but did enable me to include advertising for baby products.

I was surprised by ads in the news magazine. I expected to find many examples of female exploitation, and didn't. Perhaps this reflects a greater number of female readers and/or a heightened sensitivity to the ways women are portrayed in advertising. Liquor and airlines continue to be great abusers. One liquor ad depicts a very young, gorgeous woman sitting alone on a love seat with a drink before her and the query, "What else could anyone want?" The implication—that the woman and the drink are for the reader—excludes me. It also places the female model and drink as parallels, to be consumed by the male reader. A similar note is struck in an airline ad which shows ten beautiful women with the caption, "Ten out of ten."

Television did not surprise me. It never surprises me, only aggravates. I sometimes watch the late evening news. Beer and automotive ads predominate. I expected the jiggling, nubile bodies that accompany beer ads. I still get irritated. This time I began observing the background action. In one

ad, the female breast never left the screen! The upper part of a woman's body was either the main focus or always in the background. I also noticed men's bodies, of which there are more varieties—fat, muscular, balding, middle-aged—than there are women's bodies. Diet pop ads are often sexist and ageist but they do at least show the trim and young of both genders.

Car manufacturers have decreased the "hard sex" ads (although truck ads continue the tradition). One gasoline ad had many people singing and dancing, with the camera repeatedly returning to focus on one woman's tight-skirted derriere. Women's voices were not heard in these ads.

I turned to the afternoon soap operas to view ads targeted for women. Women's voices were heard on these ads. More often, though, it was a man's deep, authoritative voice that was extolling a product's virtues. As might be expected, the women were usually engaged in traditional activities like housecleaning or meal preparation. One ad did portray a female lawyer defending a male client. The ads relied heavily on the themes of child and spouse approval. I reacted less negatively to these ads. More disgusting were the soap operas, but I'm straying from my topic.

I listened to AM radio for one afternoon. (I had ceased listening to the local station several years ago after the DJ quipped, "Dolly Parton says she's going to run for president. If she gets elected, there will be two boobs in the White House.") The most striking thing was the almost complete absence of women. Most AM ads are read by DJ's, and most DJ's are male. Occasionally a woman's voice was inserted as a squeal or in seductive tones. I sighed, and went on.

I hoped that a women's magazine might represent a more enlightened approach. Sadly the ads were some of the most sexist I observed. I will cite two. One has a photograph of a European town square with two men in the center eyeing a woman who has walked past them; only the back half of her body is shown on the edge of the photo. The caption reads, "There's a lot less to pinch in Italy these days." The product? A weight reduction aid.

A cigarette ad troubled me in ways I couldn't understand. A very slender woman, dressed in a clinging purple gown was held aloft in a contorted position by a man in a tuxedo. Both were laughing. Behind them a fountain sprayed. As I looked at this ad I felt distressed, similar to the way I had felt when I saw a photograph of Marilyn Monroe lying nude on red satin sheets. The camera angle was directly

# Why the Playtex Nurser is most like breast-feeding.



You want to do the best for your baby. That's why you can believe in the Playtex® Nurser. Because the Playtex Nurser is designed to give your baby most of the natural benefits of breast-feeding. Like the easy sucking action and steady flow of formula that's very similar to mother's breast.



**The Natural Action™ nipple is Most Like Mother.** It's designed to imitate the natural action and shape of mother's breast. Soft and flexible, the unique shape fits a baby's mouth comfortably...placing the formula at the front of the mouth, where proper digestion begins.

**With the Playtex collapsible sac there is less air, less spitting up.** Like mother's breast, the Playtex formula sac naturally contracts so formula flows more steadily as baby feeds. It won't form a vacuum, which is sometimes a problem

with glass or hard plastic bottles. With the Playtex Nurser, baby swallows less air, has less gas, less spitting up.

**The Playtex Nurser system is convenient to use.** The Playtex formula sacs are the strongest you can buy. They're pre-sterilized, so you never buy, or scrub bottles, never have to worry about detergent residues. They're disposable. And the see-through holder has easy read markings so mother can fill the right amount.

So whether you bottle feed or need the best supplement to breast-feeding, you can believe in the Playtex Nurser. And remember, the Playtex Nurser is the perfect gift idea.



The Playtex Nurser. Most like breast-feeding.



## LATELY, THERE'S A LOT LESS TO PINCH IN ITALY.

Mamma mia! An Italian national pastime may well become a lost art. Thanks to Fibre Trim® Italy has fewer inches to pinch. Scores of women have slimmed with help from Fibre Trim. That's quite an accomplishment in a pasta and pizza paradise.

The Italians, and countless others, have helped make Fibre Trim Europe's number one slimming aid.

### A SLIMMING RENAISSANCE BEGINS

Natural Fibre Trim represents the birth of a new way of dieting. A natural way. Fibre Trim is quite simply a special blend of natural food fiber that's made from grain and citrus. A blend you can use specifically for weight loss.



Taken before meals, Fibre Trim works with your body to help you feel full. It's no panacea - just natural help that makes eating less a little more bearable.

### THE ITALIAN WAY, THE FIBRE TRIM WAY

The Italians, and the wise, attempt nothing in a hurry. Especially weight loss. The Fibre Trim plan means eating less, eating right, moving around more, and gradually losing that extra weight.

Fibre Trim can become a sensible way of life - even after you have slimmed. It's a healthy way to say "arrivederci" to excess pounds and inches, for good.

### THE EUROPEAN WAY TO SLIM, FOR GOOD.

**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.**

©1986 R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.



"Don't hate me because I'm beautiful"



"This is my hair in the morning."

"So I have to wash it. And blow dry it. Just like you. How come my hair looks great despite all this? I discovered Pantene. You see, Pantene scientists have developed a unique new formula. A formula that actually penetrates inside your hair to give it inner strength. The inner strength that makes it strong enough to stand up to daily washing, to blow dryers and curling irons. And even

the sun. And still be healthy - strong and shining. So look for Pantene Shampoos and Conditioners at fine stores everywhere. Your hair will be silkier. More supple. Beautiful. Because it has inner strength. Just like mine."

**PANTENE**  
SERIOUS CARE FOR BEAUTIFUL HAIR

**SAVE UP TO \$300**

A celebration of style and taste by **YVES SAINT LAURENT**

**RITZ**



"....ask an Indian male what is beauty and he may pick up a magazine and display an advertisement for paint which includes a good-looking semi-clad female. From what we daily see in the newspapers, magazines, television and films, everything from cigarettes to cars have to be

sold along with the body beautiful—female and unadorned....That is a blatant form of prostitution." — Margaret Duncun, in *Today*, journal of the YWCA of India.

above her, giving the viewer a powerful, controlling perspective. She seemed so vulnerable and helpless. I went back to the cigarette ad several times before I could define my discomfort. The woman's body was twisted into the shape of a vagina, as she perched on the strong, tuxedoed arm. The fountain sprayed not directly into the "vagina" but at an angle suggesting a penis and/or ejaculation.

The baby product ads were almost a welcome relief, with their soft, fuzzy nostalgic themes. Men were noticeably absent in these ads. The mothers always had long hair (just like on Little House on the Prairie!) and usually wore nightgowns. The babies were always white.

Even these ads, however, did not depict with great accuracy and as a new mother nursing her infant I found the portrayal of the Playtex nurser in one ad upsetting. What mother would agree that the nipple portrayed is, indeed, "most like mother"? Also the similarity of the poses in the two pictures—one breastfeeding and one bottlefeeding—is intended to persuade new mothers into buying the product.

When I became pregnant, I suddenly realized that pregnant women are not depicted in ads (unless it's specifically for a maternity product). I had an odd sense of exclusion as if my group (pregnant women) had become unacceptable. This led me to speculate about the feelings of other unincluded groups like the elderly and blacks and native Canadians. No wonder my Chinese-Canadian friend believes her face is not as beautiful as that of Caucasian women.

A few weeks after my child was born, I marvelled at the female body. I had grown this perfect tiny human being, brought him healthy into the world and was providing all his nutritional needs with food manufactured within me. I'll never think negatively about this body again, I thought. This lasted until I saw the beer ad during the 11 o'clock news.

Comparisons among the ads in various media? I think TV ads are quite dangerous. These ads are both visual and auditory and very fast-paced, providing ample opportunity to inject subliminal messages. In summary, my brief and incomplete survey indicates that we have a long way to go to match Nicaraguan advertising policies. ■

**Melissa Miller is currently enjoying a maternity leave from her work as a mediation coordinator with Community Justice Initiatives. She lives in Kitchener, Ontario.**

By Mary Jane King

## Good Housekeeping: The Changing Image of Women

This spring General Mills unveiled its newest version of Betty Crocker. In this latest transformation, Betty is clearly a yuppie who would seem more at home as a junior executive in a modern office than as a mother in a kitchen with flour on her front.

Food editors took the opportunity to be clever in their columns at Betty's expense but most women probably didn't pay much attention. Most women are too busy having it all and trying to keep it.

Betty's changing image reflects trends in real life—or at least trends that Madison Avenue divines as it studies psychological profiles and other research used to continually persuade the North American consumer to buy more.

This article focuses on the image of women during this century as found in the advertising of *Good Housekeeping*, a conservative women's magazine which proclaims that it exercises "strict editorial judgment in the consideration of products it will accept for advertising." We will look at the December issue of five years beginning in 1909 and ending in 1985. (Although *Good Housekeeping* began publication in 1885, the local university's archives go back only to 1909.)

The observations here are not so much a critique of *Good Housekeeping*—many of these ads appeared in other women's magazines—as they are an attempt to understand what Mennonite women of today and their mothers before them have seen in a magazine to which some have no doubt subscribed. Although perhaps not as dramatic as an expose of television commercials or ads seen in flashier magazines for women and general audiences, these *Good Housekeeping* issues reveal mainstream images which may be all the more shocking for being so staid.

The year 1909 saw the inauguration of William Howard Taft as president of the United States and state visits by Edward VII to Berlin and Rome. Lenin was publishing,

A full-page ad in *The Boston Globe* appeared with this caption: "Finish with the Leaders!" The picture said it all! There were runners in track attire. The white male was in the lead and most prominent; close behind, the Black male; almost keeping pace with the Black male was the white female—but

only half of her is visible. And the missing person—the Black woman. Two males, one white, one Black; half of a white female; no Black female.—Gloria I. Joseph, professor, Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass.

Freud was lecturing in the United States and hairdressers in London were giving the first permanent waves.

Advertising is scarce in the December 1909 *Good Housekeeping*, limited to five ads on four pages at the back of the 145-page issue. Articles draw on Christmas themes and reflect family and home concerns.

Perhaps the lack of advertising can be tied to attitudes found in an article near the front of the magazine entitled "When Woman Buys." It begins: "Many women derive much the same sensation from being a party to a business transaction as a child gets out of masquerading in grown-up's clothes, a sense of being mysteriously exalted into a sphere of dignity where they don't belong and where all their attempts to sustain the role will be looked at with loving indulgence." After a catalogue of anecdotes demonstrating woman's ineptitude in the business world, the article closes with a merchant calling for patience until women gain more experience in the commercial sphere.

Only two women appear in the ads in this issue. One is a slim, schoolmarmish woman with glasses who has written instructions on a blackboard concerning the proper preparation of Postum, the coffee substitute. "Boil it for 15 minutes for fullest flavor," she instructs. The other woman, also young and pretty, is singing the praises of a washing powder.

All the ads in the issue are very straightforward and rely heavily on the written word to get their message across.

Twenty years later the world remembered one world war and was running toward another. While Erich Marie Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* was a bestseller, Hitler began gearing up his army. Also in 1929, the stock market crashed, the first Mickey Mouse films were released and the first crease-resisting cotton fabric was developed in England.

December's *Good Housekeeping* that year gives no indication of the stock market crash or the economic depression which was to follow. Headlines include "What Smart Women Are Wearing in Paris and in New York" and "Don't Be Afraid to Be a Hostess This Christmastide." The latter features suggested holiday menus for the housekeeper with a maid and for the housekeeper in business.

Advertising is greatly expanded by 1929 and many of the ads have gone from black and white to full color. There are many women—an elegant woman with her maid coming home from shopping in a luxury automobile, "an

elite Bostonian of dark distinguished beauty" exhibiting the benefits of a cleansing cream, a distraught woman being reprimanded by a store manager because she didn't wash her new gloves with Ivory, a mother calling her children at school over the lines of AT&S, a plump woman sitting out a dance and vowing to reduce with a tomato juice cocktail, an ecstatic wife hugging her husband because he has just given her a washing machine.

There are two images of women here. Although the position of housewife is central with many appeals to the wife and mother to buy the best for her family and convenience for herself, there is an appeal to wealth and elegance. As an ad for Oneida silverware coos: "She entertains a lot...she gives heavenly parties...her house is kept with an unostentatious perfection that is the envy of her women friends..." And there is that Boston beauty—a diplomat's wife. She clearly is worlds from the woman in a cotton housedress running her Hoover.

The housewife isn't quite so independent. She needs her husband to acquire those appliances which make her life easier and there's certainly no hint that she won't continue to vacuum or do laundry or dole out Pet milk and cod liver oil. She appears to need someone to tell her what cakes men like or how to take proper care of her delicate garments.

The December 1949 issue caps a year in which the world was still trying to forget World War II. Harry Truman was inaugurated, Israel was admitted into the United Nations, the German Federal Republic was created. Also that year, "South Pacific" was a hit musical on Broadway, T.S. Eliot wrote *The Cocktail Party* and clothes rationing ended in Britain.

The woman for whom this December's issue was created is a woman in the home—a wife and mother whose first concern is the care of her family. There are fashion and beauty articles and a few ads selling glamor, but they are overshadowed by the image of a married woman raising her family at home. As in issues of the magazine before as well as those to follow, there is no evidence of unmarried women, divorced or widowed women or single women as parents. And there are no minority women.

In this issue ads show mothers drying their children's feet and dispensing Listerine to ward off colds. A mother praises Campbell's tomato soup as the base for "my two favorite spaghetti sauces" and mothers in a Duz detergent ad waltz with their clean towels and overalls.

These women do not have names of their own. A Lysol ad

# An elite Bostonian of dark distinguished beauty

MRS.

FRANKLIN MOTT

GUNTHER

is a leader in the Diplomatic  
Circles of three Continents.

LONDON, The Hague, Rome, Washington, Cairo—have all acclaimed the charm, the chic, the dark distinguished beauty of Mrs. Franklin Mott Gunther, wife of the well-known American diplomat.

Tall and of regal carriage, Mrs. Gunther has the lovely coloring of a Velasquez portrait. Her dusky hair is in striking contrast to her wonderful topaz eyes and the clear pale olive of her perfect skin.

Aristocrat in the true sense, Mrs. Gunther comes of a fine old Boston family, the Hunnells. As a young girl, she went abroad to finish her education.

In Paris, as in America, a beautifully-kept skin is the first essential to chic. Mrs. Gunther chose the famous Two Creams to keep her own skin smooth and clear!

"I have used Pond's," she says, "ever since I was a young girl. For Pond's Creams are utterly wholesome, and I believe the skin should receive simple care." Now Mrs. Gunther finds Pond's two new products delightful. "The Freshener tones the skin so gently," she adds, "and the Tissues are the only immaculate means of removing Cold Cream." This is the



Pond's four famous products used by beautiful and distinguished women—where—Cold Cream—Tissue—



## Start your Christmas dinner in November!

1969



Ah, merry merry Christmas—family to visit, friends dropping by, and parties to give in the holiday spirit! Ah, so many people to feed! Team up with your freezer now for gracious giving and entertaining later. When the time comes, your house will be filled with the warm smells of Christmas baking. And you'll have time to enjoy the season.

Dinner waits to be baked—with Jingle-Bells on! Desserts, appetizers and casseroles are among the easiest things to freeze. But did you know you can also freeze dinner rolls you bake ahead, cranberry relish, even your Christmas sweet potatoes? We have a Yuletide gift for you—our booklet *Holiday Parties on Ice*. It's filled with festive recipes, ideas and secrets of frozen success. For your free copy, write General Mills, Inc., Dept. 253B, Mpls., Minn. 55440.

An up-to-date twist with traditional mincemeat. Christmas is a season for our time-honored favorite foods. But it's fun to innovate, too. Try these moist 'n' spicy **ICED MINCEMEAT AND DATE BARS**:

Heat oven to 400°. Grease oblong pan, 13x9x2 inches. Mix date filling and crumbly mix from one package Betty Crocker Date Bar Mix, 1 cup prepared mincemeat, 1 egg, 1/4 cup chopped nuts and 1/4 cup hot water. Spread in pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes. Cool; freeze. To serve, thaw; then frost with a simple confectioners' sugar icing.

Oh Divine Divinity! A lovely tradition but too hard? Not anymore! There's an easy no-cook divinity recipe on every package of Betty Crocker Fluffy White Frosting Mix.

If visions of sugary plums dance—in their tummies!

When vitamins have to compete with candy, try serving colorful, fruit-flavored cereal.



KABOOM cereal with that freezer staple—ice cream! KABOOM is the new "Big O" cereal that actually contains 100% of the minimum daily adult requirement of vitamins and iron.

I'm dreaming of a pink Christmas?

Why not? General Mills' jolly snowflakes makes it easy to deck your halls with holiday decorations that are color coordinated to your home or apartment.

You can use ordinary food coloring to tint our snow-white flocking. Or, sparkle it with the new SNO\*FLOK GIGANT HOLIDAY GLITTER KIT. Look for it at your variety store.

Happy Holidays! Now relax and enjoy your "top secret" projects... Christmas is in the freezer!

Betty Crocker  
OF GENERAL MILLS



\*Offer expires April 1, 1970



MRS. FRANKLIN MOTT GUNTHER, wife of the distinguished American diplomat, is a gracious hostess, whose hospitality has delighted hundreds of travelers abroad.

complete Pond's Method of caring for the skin:

First, for thorough cleansing, apply Pond's Cold Cream over face and neck, several times a day, and always after exposure. Pat on generously with upward, outward strokes, letting the light, pure oils sink deep into the pores and bring the dirt to the surface.

Then with Pond's Cleansing Tissues, soft, ample, absorbent, gently wipe away cream and dirt. These new Tissues economize towels and laundry.

Next, after cleansing dab Pond's Skin Freshener briskly over face and neck. It closes the pores, firms, invigorates the skin, leaves it without a trace of oiliness.

Last, smooth in a delicate film-fishing Cream for protection. At bedtime—

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## THIS MONTH

1949

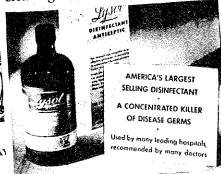


MRS. DONALD VANDENBERG, wife of Grand Rapids, Mich., jeweler, with Baby Sandra. Her daily routine includes disinfection as a guard against flu, other disease germs.

## Applies Hospital Precaution in Her Home

"WHAT BETTER WAY"... asks this sensible young mother of two... "could I help guard our home against disease germs than to use 'Lysol', as so many hospitals do? I always put potent 'Lysol' in the cleaning water..."

"ESPECIALLY NOW"—with flu around—it's vitally important to disinfect walls, floors, woodwork and furniture. Doorknobs, too, because they get so much handling... maybe by flu-infected persons, these days. For 'hospital' cleanliness, I add 2½ tablespoons of 'Lysol' to each gallon of cleaning water."



KEEP YOUR HOME protected—with "Lysol." Flu virus can live for weeks in house dust. So disinfect daily as you clean—with potent "Lysol," as Mrs. Vandenberg wisely does!



"DEPENDABLE 'Lysol' is a must when cleaning the bathroom. I'd never omit using this powerful germicide to disinfect the bathtub and washbowl... toilet seat and floor."



MANY AND MANY a healthy, happy owes much to "Lysol" for its powerful killing disease germs. "Lysol" brand factant kills the dread flu virus on

"Never met  
a Scoundrel  
I didn't like."

1986

Introducing  
New Scoundrel Musk  
Unmistakably female. Undeniably provocative.

1909

## POSTUM

must be boiled  
15 minutes—until  
dark and rich.  
That brings  
out the flavour  
and food  
value.

### At the Cooking School

It is surprising how quickly those old headaches leave the person who quits coffee, and has found out how to make

## POSTUM

RIGHT—

And who prizes health and the ability to "do things."  
Ten days' trial will prove

"There's a Reason" for POSTUM.

Postum Cereal Company, Limited, Battle Creek, Mich., U. S. A.

## The Changing Image of Good Housekeeping Women



**"In the U.S.A., Black women who are used in advertisements are little more than white women in tan faces."—Gloria I. Joseph, professor, Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass.**

shows "Mrs. Donald Vandenberg, wife of a Grand Rapids, Mich., jeweler, with Baby Sandra. Her daily routine includes disinfection as a guard against flu and other disease germs."

And while these women may be spending money, it comes from indulging husbands. As one woman says in a Dodge commercial, the automobile "looks like a million but saves my husband money."

Looking at these ads, one is struck with the complete lack of acknowledgement of the war years just concluded and the roles women filled outside the home during that time. There also is no recognition of women who continued to work once the war was over and who continued to spend the money they earned. *Good Housekeeping*, like most of North America, was glad to forget the changes the war had brought and to return to normal as quickly as possible. But normal was never to be the same again.

By 1969, *Good Housekeeping* was admitting to some changes. And the events of that year reflect the upheaval of the times and foreshadow things to come. Richard Nixon was inaugurated, Sirhan Sirhan was tried and convicted for the murder of Robert Kennedy and James Earl Ray got 99 years for the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. It was the year of Chappaquiddick, of "Oh, Calcutta," of Woodstock and the Apollo moon landing. It was also the year of major protests against the war in Vietnam and the year the trouser outfit became acceptable for everyday wear by women.

The December 1969 issue of *Good Housekeeping* features usual Christmas fare including an article on "The Christmas That Meant Most to Me." Those testimonials come from astronaut Walter M. Schirra Jr., Mrs. Spiro T. Agnew and Mrs. Billie Jean King. In one departure from the Christmas food and decorations, there is a story about a white family adopting a child of mixed race.

The women in the ads are decidedly different in looks from their sisters of 20 years ago. They have discovered false eyelashes, the miniskirt and vaginal deodorants. Five of the first 10 pages of the issue are devoted to Clairol ads. Two of these allude to the working woman. A makeup mirror ad mentions "daylight, office light and evening light," and an instant hairsetter ad begins: "You spend a busy day running a household. Handling a job. Stretching a budget..."

There is the feeling here that these women are out of breath, short of time to meet all the demands placed on them. Betty Crocker—No. 4—advises women to freeze foods early for the Christmas rush. Chef Boy-Ar-Dee notes that "One day

this week, you'll wish to heaven there was someone to cook dinner for you," and Sears sells its sewing machine with a testimonial from Rosemarie Bowe, wife of actor Robert Stack, who sews to unwind from her hectic round as wife, mother and volunteer.

The traditional mother image is still important in the ads which reflect nostalgically on earlier times and which show Mother as the safekeeper of the children—Sears sells flame-retardant sleepwear that way. Mother also has taken on a new role as caretaker of the family pet. While automobile ads of the past are gone and appliance ads take up much less space, the pet food ads are coming into their own in 1969.

By 1985, the December issue of *Good Housekeeping* is devoting an entire section to pets and the ads for dog and cat food are legion. The women in this issue—both the ones in the ads and the ones for whom the articles were written—seem very out of touch with reality. (Did my mother feel that way about the women of the 1949 ads?)

Despite the diet craze that grips Western women, the food articles and the food ads give the impression that women are happy with their thighs and waistlines. Even Betty Crocker—sans face—signs her numerous ads as "Your sweetalker, Betty Crocker."

The women appear to be homemakers full time. Who else could spend hours constructing the intricate cookie house on the cover? And they appear to have husbands who provide ample incomes. Who else could afford the pages of toys advertised for the children of baby boom mothers?

This image flies in the face of statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau which indicate that in 1984 nearly half of mothers returned to work in the first year after childbirth. And in the suburban Washington area, where 65 percent of women are in the labor force (the highest in the United States), well over half of women who work have children under 6 years of age. These statistics do not begin to tell the story about single parents and other factors that are changing family life.

Aside from the image of women as mothers and homemakers—and two or three career women in a pain medicine ad—there are the images of beauty. These are even less realistic. There are pieces of women—legs (an ad for panty hose), fingers (moisturizers), fingernails (nail polish). There are four perfume ads, three hawked by actresses and one named for the heroine of an evening television soap opera.

Consider the ad for Sophia, a perfume named for the Italian

• **For Further Study**

This listing includes books, articles and films which the contributors have used, as well as books located in bibliographies which appeared to have good, pertinent content. The reader will be able to tell which the contributors have endorsed because they each have several sentence descriptions. More information would be available to individuals using the resources of most medium-

to large-sized libraries.

• *The Child and Television Drama: The Psychosocial Impact of Cumulative Viewing*. Mental Health Materials Center, 30 E. 29th St. New York, N.Y. 10016. 1982. Approaches TV viewing (programs, rather than commercials) from the angle of children's developmental tasks and needs. Unique because it considers the cumulative impact, which many isolated studies do not.

• Courtney, Alice E. and Whipple, Thomas W. *Sex Stereotyping in Advertising*. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath & Company. 1983. Excellent overview, a lot of factual data. Extensive 21-page bibliography.

• Friedman, Leslie. *Sex Role Stereotyping in the Mass Media: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland Publishing. 1977.

• Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. *Images of Women in Advertising*. 1977. Copies of this excellent pamphlet are available for \$2 from the Interfaith Center, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 566, New York, N.Y. 10027.

• Jones, Stephen A. *Subliminal Advertising in American Broadcast Media*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Legislative Services, Yale Law School, 1978.

actress of international fame. Under three disapproving faces of stereotypical "old ladies," is the message: "Let them talk." The copy continues: "They say you're not as innocent as you seem. They say you have a past. They say you cry too easily and laugh too much. They're right, you do. So do I. Now wear my perfume and let them talk." Is this the image of sexuality the homemaker carries with her as she decides what cat food to buy or which toy will best entertain and educate her child?

What conclusions to draw from these observations? The 1909 issue aside, women appear in these ads as unrealistically categorized and objectified. The unreality is frightening at least for the generation I know. I imagine it was also true for the women of the 1920s and 1940s despite the ads full of testimonials from "real people."

If that is true, then any image we have seen or been in some way attracted to is false and unachievable. Is there cause for concern? Do we really pay all that much attention to the women in the ads? Maybe not consciously. But how much sinks into the subconscious where it affects our daily lives in ways we do not know? Where it manipulates us with urges, fears and guilt we cannot explain?

Perhaps we should question ourselves routinely when we make or contemplate purchases. Perhaps being aware is the best revenge, the best defense against manipulation. ■

Mary Jane King is Director of Communications at Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va. and an occasional teacher of journalism and mass communications courses. She is currently president of Virginia Press Women.

By Carol Beechy, M.D.

## Women and Medical Advertising

The seductive, scantily clad temptress advertising relief from painful menstrual cramps, the psychoneurotic housewife who needs Valium, the quarrelsome old grandma who needs tranquilizing are close relatives of the female with the migrating womb (thought in the 19th century to be responsible for many ills affecting women)—unbelievable sexist stereotypes, seen in the recent past—and now largely absent from medical journals.

Having been paid half of my male counterpart's salary as

an administrative assistant for a health project in 1971; having been asked during medical school interviews in 1972 what I would do if some handsome young man came along and swept me off my feet; having been refused cases and denied a recommendation for a surgical residency one year after being named the outstanding medical student in surgery because "I wouldn't want my daughter in surgery"; and knowing the statistics about lower pay, slower progress in academia and other examples of continued bias against women in medicine, I was surprised to find little evidence of that bias in medical advertisements.

I tried.

I looked first in journals from internal medicine, my own specialty. Then I started pawing through the "throwaways," unsolicited magazines two-thirds advertising underwritten by the drug industry. Startled at not finding sexist ads, I then turned toward journals where I was sure I would find them—surgery and obstetrics and gynecology. Not even there.

This is not to imply that drug companies have become subscribers to truth in advertising. There are still many half-truths about effectiveness, side effects and indications. But now the doctor is about as likely to be a woman as a man, the anxious patient in need of Valium a lumberman after a heart attack, the depressive in need of a drug to "wipe away that grey haze" a businessman.

Why?

I think it is simply a recognition that the market has changed, that with one-quarter to one-third of medical school classes women, sexist ads no longer pay.

The more interesting question is why there are so many more women in medicine. Is it a result of the women's movement and sexual equality? While that has certainly played a role, I think the increasing number of women in medicine is also related to the decreasing attractiveness of becoming a doctor—the declining status of medicine; the increase in paperwork, liability, mistrust and frustration; the drop in power and rewards both tangible and intangible. That is a question which will be interesting to ponder.

It is, nonetheless, a matter of rejoicing that the blatantly sexist ads are gone from the Western medical journals. ■

Carol Beechy is a general internist on staff at Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown, N.Y. where she is involved in outreach clinics, a nursing home and teaching. She has also worked in Shirati, Tanzania and with Ethiopian refugees in Sudan.



• *Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women*. 29-minute color film. Complete overview of the portrayal of women in advertising; for awareness of the situation it is unbeatable as an introduction. Available from: Cambridge Documentary Films, Inc., Box 385, Cambridge, MA 02139 (617-354-3677).

• Liebert, Robert, Sprafkin, Joyce and Davidson, Emily. *The Early Window*, (Effects of Television on Children and Youth) 2nd ed.

Pergamon Press. 1982. Although the emphasis is on violence, there are helpful chapters on advertising, race and sex. Excellent, broad view of entire issue.

• *Media Guidelines*. Proposed by the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year. Brief brochure giving 10 media guidelines and a checklist for the portrayal of women in entertainment programming and advertising.

An excellent resource for individuals or groups who want to do their own research and want to contact those in the industry about their concerns. Photocopies available from the Report editor.

• Williamson, Judith. *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*. London: Marion Boyars Publishers, Ltd. 1978.

• Packard, Vance. *Hidden Persuaders*. D. McKay Co. 1957. Classic in the field. A must for anyone interested in exploring advertising manipulation and exploitation.

by Emily Will

## Advertising and Third World Women

*And so my son went to a neighbor's house and saw a TV set, watched a program that showed him a marvelous world where there were mice that spoke and beautiful parks and things. That was the world of Disneyland. And my little son came back home and said to me:*

*"Mommy, I'm going to be a good boy. Why don't you send me to Disneyland? I want to play with the little bear, with the little mouse. You're going to take me to Disneyland, aren't you? I also want that little train, mommy."*

*And for the week my son didn't want to play with his toys anymore, with his sardine cans and milk cans. He didn't want to go out in the street, he wanted to go to Disneyland. He dreamed about Disneyland...*

*Two or three days later I met my companeras in the grocery store:*

*"Ay! Last night there was a fashion show. It was beautiful, just beautiful! And to think that we, who work from four in the morning washing, ironing, cooking, taking care of the kids, coming to the grocery store, will never, never be able to have one of those suits, one of those hair styles, one of those jewels you see on TV. How sad that we married miners!"*

Domitila Barrios de Chungara, miner's wife, homemaker and activist, is describing what happened when the Bolivian military government distributed 5,000 TV sets in her poor tin mining community in 1974. The excerpt is taken from this courageous woman's story, *Let Me Speak*.

For Domitila and for other poor, nonwestern women everywhere, the non-advertising content of mass media—no less so than the advertising—conveys images, ideas and values "that violently crash against their reality," as one Latin American sociologist has put it. (Santa Cruz 1984)

Mass media is foreign to the reality of nonwestern women because it is basically an import, rather than an expression of indigenous culture. The world powers and transnational corporations were often responsible for installing mass media networks in the Third World. Today they often own the advertising agencies which support the mass media and they supply much of the media's non-commercial content—the programs, articles, news, etc. (Schenkel, Beltran and Cardona) In some Latin American countries, for example, over 80 percent of the television programming is produced in the United States. (UNICEF) Much of the advertising is for products sold by international corporations; sometimes the advertisements are the same ones that are used in the United States, but are dubbed in Spanish. (Wells)

The effects of this "media imperialism," as it has been termed (Salinas and Paldan), are far reaching, affecting impoverished women and their families in at least the following four ways:

### 1. Mass media creates "impossible dreams" and destroys indigenous culture.

Domitila's son, the one who pined to visit Disneyland, lived with his parents and six brothers and sisters in a little two-room house which had no running water, bathroom or kitchen facilities. At times he did not have enough to eat. Television—rather than teaching him pride in his Indian heritage and information useful to his situation—was leading him into a fantasy land.

A Brazilian Minister of Education once said, "Commercial television is imposing on the youngsters and children of our country a culture that has nothing to do with Brazilian culture... Thus, instead of being a creative element in the diffusion of Brazilian culture, television appears as a privileged vehicle of cultural import, a basic factor in the 'de-characterization' of our creativity." (as quoted in Katz)

### 2. Mass media encourages women to purchase products which are inappropriate to their situation.

The promotion of infant formula to impoverished women is perhaps the best-known example. I learned just how pervasive and persuasive such advertising was while carrying out graduate research in urban Honduras in 1982. Of the 244 poor women with whom I spoke, nearly 75 percent told me they had seen formula advertising, primarily on TV. The women were especially familiar with Nestle brands: 61 percent named at least one Nestle brand that they had seen promoted. Brand familiarity led to brand use. Of the 74 percent who said they would offer their newborn a bottle, 91 percent would fill the bottle with a

• The “transnational model” — white, young, “sexy,” slender — (upper left) teases with a bit of exposed belly in the Central American version of *Good Housekeeping*. The distinction between ad and article sometimes blurs: this model was portrayed in an “article” about the latest colors of well-known brands of make-up. (June 18, 1986 issue of *Buenhogar*)

• The English grammar in the ad at upper center is not quite

correct (we can’t comment on the Thai!) but who’s going to notice what with the model’s lewd pose and the proffered promise of “freshness and fun.” This “Guide Escort Service” was advertised in the September 1986 issue of *Saen Sanuk*, “Thailand’s most comprehensive and widely read magazine for tourists.”

• The powerful man’s hand, holding the “black” perfume as if it were a club, is no less

disturbing than the printed message: “the sweet violence of a man’s perfume.” “Sweet violence?” This ad was one of no fewer than 11 ads for French perfumes in the Sept. 2, 1986 issue of the Latin American magazine, *Vanidades*. The captions were written in French, undoubtedly in the hope of imparting a cosmopolitan aura to the product.

• Bottom left: The models look Filipino but the message is

transnational—do whatever it takes, ladies, to win your man’s approval. (From the Sept. 26, 1986 issue of *Mod*, a slick magazine for Filipino women.)

• Bottom right: One can almost hear the yodeling on the pristine Swiss alps. Who says Nestle doesn’t know how to sell its milk to Filipino women, 0.036% of whom are Caucasian. (Also from *Mod*)

Nestle brand. (Will)

I was surprised that so many had access to TV, considering their poverty. Their poverty was visible to the eye, but it also showed up in the numbers of preschoolers who had died. One-fifth of the women with whom I spoke had lost at least one child before the age of 5; 11 percent had lost two or more children. Such poverty leads to home environments that are hardly conducive to safe bottle feeding, as I discovered during an MCC term in rural Jamaica: Once a neighbor child came to ask if we had a spare baby bottle for her little brother. She showed me the old one. Made of plastic, it was yellow with age and dirt and had a gaping hole in the bottom where, she explained, “the rats ate it.” (At 18 months, the baby was the size of a healthy eight-month-old and so weak that he was unable to support his weight on his spindly legs, yet the mother was convinced he needed “tinned feed” to regain his health.)

Although formula advertising has been curtailed in most places, my Jamaican neighbors and the Honduran women with whom I spoke were being influenced by the marketing of other products scarcely less harmful to their family’s well-being. Nestle continues to push its whole milk powders, such as Nido, in the Third World. The sales pitch, usually aimed at women, is the milk’s wholesomeness for children. Can uneducated mothers tell the difference between a can of infant formula and a can of Nido?

In both Honduras and Jamaica, and in many other impoverished areas as well, nonessential junk foods are being aggressively advertised and are responsible for what nutrition authority Derrick Jelliffe has termed “commerciogenic malnutrition.” In Jamaica, children regularly spend their school lunch money on soft drinks and snack foods, such as cheese puffs. In Honduras, new mothers are increasingly being sold on commercial baby foods, such as cereals, Gerbers infant foods and Nestle infant soups.

In 1982, a two-serving package of Nestle infant soup—consisting primarily of dried milk powder, rice flour, cornstarch and seasonings—cost 55 U.S. cents, not cheap for a family whose mean weekly income is about \$54 U.S. Aggressive advertising is encouraging poor mothers to divert their precious household money to such infant junk foods, in which the packaging is likely worth as much as the little starch-laced dried milk it contains.

### 3. Mass media presents alien and offensive concepts of femininity and women’s roles.

Women depicted in transnational advertisements are

invariably glamorous Western “cover girls.” They are white. They are young. They are slender. They are sexy. Adriana Santa Cruz calls such representations the essence of THE WOMAN. Such ads convert women to objects: Santa Cruz’ research showed that the great majority of ads in Latin American women’s magazines portrayed women as aesthetic and sexual objects. Sexual “double entendre” is often an element. A Singapore Airlines ad portrays their stewardesses as “gentle, mysterious and eager to please.” In Malaysia, a Winston cigarette ad shows a very white Malay woman wearing a wet clinging blouse with the caption, “Reach for Flavor.” (Gay 1984)

We can only imagine what it must do to women’s self-image and self-esteem to be deluged with the image and idea that the valued personal attributes are ones that they do not have: a white skin and wealth. In one study of Philippine print advertising, 30 to 50 percent of the images were Caucasian. An infinitesimal 0.036 percent of the Philippine population is Caucasian. And 90 percent of the advertisements represented middle or upper-class lifestyles in a country where 87 percent of the population is poor. (Marquez)

Western women travelling or residing abroad may harvest unwelcome results from their stereotypes as planted by global media interests:

“Women abroad complain particularly of being treated as sex objects. Loungers call out, ‘Hello, darling, let me kiss you,’ as you walk by. Women do not invite these comments—or whistles which say the same thing. They come, at least in part, from that image on the ‘silver screen’ that shows Western women as easily available. Nancy had an experience which illustrates this problem. She went to the airport from the office to meet a visitor. She was ‘professionally attired.’ While waiting she noticed that there was a videotape being shown of a blond performer gyrating her way through several sexy musical numbers, clad in a scanty costume. The local men, with their chins on the floor, were gazing from the video screen to Nancy and back again, obviously associating her with the performer. She felt decidedly uncomfortable, knowing that she and the performer meshed in their minds.” (Piet-Pelon and Hornby)

### 4. Mass media systems controlled by transnational interests tend to make women protectors and defenders of the status quo.

Some say that mass media foments revolution by creating rising expectations and opening a window for poor people to view how others live. Many feminists, however, are saying that it does the opposite: that mass media creates a



Revlon

Las líneas "Café Blau" de Revlon tienen los colores muy fuertes al palidísimo. Ofrecen asimismo tonos de cobrizos y dorados azules, pero con brillos. Con el colorido de esta nueva línea se logra una "look" ligero y algo pálido que se ve muy natural...

FRESH AND FUN

### GUIDE ESCORT SERVICE

If you feel lonely and would like to have a good friend, we provide nice ladies who are highly educated, well mannered, well-trained and able to speak foreign languages.

無休 24時間営業  
ご観光案内やビジネス旅行同伴するたれに当店は半額のある特約女性見入や欧米オーストラリアー女性を用意してあります。スペシャル：男性同伴、映画俳優及びモデルを手配可能

24-hr service at a reasonable price.

Urgently Required  
An American, European, and foreign girls.  
Beautiful girl with an Excellent Residence.

Special  
Male escorts and foreign lady are recommended

211-7280



La douce violence d'un parfum d'homme.

DRAKKAR NOIR



"My husband never noticed when I changed my hair color. Until I had a Bellady color."

You know the feeling. You spend hours with your hair stylist, a different hair-style each time, and you might as well be just one of the fixtures. But there was one thing I hadn't tried: Change the color of my hair. Not just a timid, slight change. I went for Mahogany.

(And I didn't have to go to the parlor. With Bellady shampoo-in hair color, I was through in less than 40 minutes.)

Discover a new you — in less than 40 minutes.

Bellady is a do-it-yourself, shampoo-in hair color specially developed for easy home application. So special, it's called Bellady. So simple, as shampooing your hair. It's as simple as shampooing your hair. In about 40 minutes you'll be seeing a new you.

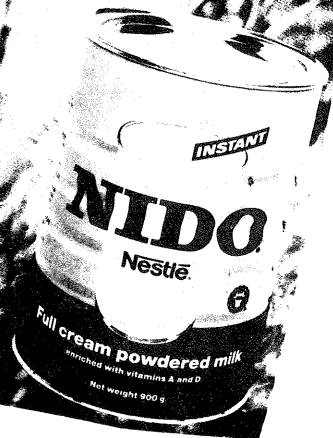
Choose from 15 Bellady shades to suit your fancy.

WELLA  
bellady



For the world's No. 1 child. Your child.

The World's No. 1  
Full Cream Powdered Milk



The children were the first to notice. "Wow, Mommy's changed!" I had long waited to color my hair, too, but I thought you'd disapprove! "See, I told you Mommy's still young!" My husband? I didn't really expect him to take. He was tongue-tied. Disaster, I thought. Then he said, "How about dinner tonight?" My day was made.

• Words Into Action

by Ellen Shenk

What can, or should, you do about the situation of women and advertising? I think it is imperative that each of us do something. Our response will be as individual as each of us is—there is no one answer for all of us.

You have already taken the first step by reading this publication.

Education is important. We should know how advertising portrays women and how this affects us and others.

We can also take our own, silent revenge by refusing to purchase the offending products.

There are many documented changes which have occurred because of action. One focus on a *Ms.* magazine "No Comment" page—an advertisement for club cocktails which used the

slogan, "Hit me with a Club"—was withdrawn when the company received over 1,000 letters protesting the not-too-subtle invitation to physical abuse. In a letter to *Ms.* the company stated that it had not occurred to them before that this advertisement condoned physical abuse, however, the arguments in the letters convinced them to cancel this series of advertisements.

We can also work to educate others by having an evening or series on this topic in our local women's or other group (not only women should be aware of the problem). Or we can contact organizations which are working for change and get involved in one of the myriad of ways possible. And, as stated in Lois Beck's article, we can work to counter the effects of advertising on our children by helping them see through the advertising.

consumeristic, fairy tale mindset that numbs women to their real life situation and leads them to believe that social change is threatening to them.. In her study of Latin American women's magazines, Adriana Santa Cruz found that significant political events were either totally ignored or else trivialized, such as by giving more coverage to leaders' dress and diet than to their politics and policies.

"Thus," Santa Cruz (1984) writes, "the values that women's magazines are transmitting not only do not stimulate women to actively participate in their reality, but contribute to create a different reality in which she can evade herself. This has clear political significance."

The Bolivian government of 1974 understood the political significance of transnational media—and wanted to harness its anesthetizing effects—when they distributed 5,000 TV sets in the Siglo XX tin mining community.

Just months after the TV distribution, the army occupied Siglo XX and destroyed the radio transmitters owned and operated by the mining union. The radio had served as the workers' voice, informing workers of their situation and helping to organize them for change.

The miners reacted with a strike and Domitila Barrios de Chungara later had the opportunity to testify about television to a government commission:

*"...Of course it's nice to have a TV, to see other countries and all that. But... what a misfortune, what a misfortune to see other countries that don't produce tin and yet are getting rich from it, they have fantasy-like worlds for their children and we don't have anything! How painful it is to see that our companeros are wrecking their lungs in the mines only to make the foreigners wealthy. And how painful it is for us women who have to be cook, washerwoman, babysitter, and everything, without ever having any of those comforts they show us on TV. Aren't we also women like the ones we see there? Don't we work as much as they do? And they can have everything and wear everything, while we're drowning in poverty.*

*"...How nice it would be to have a television channel for ourselves, in our hands! In that case, yes, it would be beautiful. Yes, we'd like to have a TV channel, but one that talks about our situation, our problems, one that educates us."*

Domitila's dream of media "in our hands" is also the dream of feminists as they begin to organize to counter the pernicious effects of transnational media. Latin American

women have begun several alternative media endeavors. A group of Peruvian women are putting out a women's magazine designed to compete with the glossy, sophisticated ones produced by multinationals. They are also broadcasting a nationwide radio program to discuss feminist concerns. In both, women are portrayed in roles reflecting the reality of the Peruvian woman—as peasants, domestic servants, housewives, etc. (Gay 1983) Fempress is the first feminist news agency in Latin America. Correspondents in 10 countries collect and write articles which are supplied to approximately 500 institutions and 200 media. (Santa Cruz 1986) The Latin American Institute of Transnational Studies is working to create a network of women who are producing alternative media for women.

**Emily Will works at women's concerns and the military tax resistance issue in MCC's U.S. Peace Section. She and her husband, Mark, served with MCC from 1978 to 1981 in Jamaica, where their first son was born. A second son was born in Akron, Pa. in 1984.**

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For your use we are including addresses of TV networks, government advisory bodies and organizations working for change.

#### TV Networks

- NBC, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10020
- CBS, 51 W. 52nd St., New York, N.Y. 10019
- ABC, 1330 Ave. of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019

#### Government Advisory Bodies

- Advertising Advisory Board, 1240 Bay St., Suite 305, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 2A7 (416) 961-6311
- National Advertising Review Board, Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., 845 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022 (212) 754-1320 (Has a Children's Advertising Review Unit

and a 1975 report on advertising and women)

#### Organizations

- Media Action Research Center, Suite 1370, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10115 (212) 865-6690
- Telecommunications Research and Action Center, P.O. Box 12038, Washington, D.C. 20005

(202) 462-2520.

(Publishes *Citizens Media Directory*, an invaluable handbook of information about national and local media reform groups)

(For a more complete listing of organizations and resources involved in changing the images and status of North American women, write to the Report editor.)

by Lois Beck

## "Mommy, Do I Have Ring Around the Collar?"

When I'm grocery shopping with one of our children, I have a firm policy of always saying no to requests for TV-advertised food. But this time, 7-year-old Andrea's pleading was more insistent than usual. Finally I gave in, reached for the Pringles and placed them in the shopping cart, thinking that the begging would end. I was wrong. Now Andrea wanted to eat them—before we even reached the check-out counter. The pleading continued until we got home and I had agreed to eat a chip as Andrea ate hers. Then she asked, "Does it taste like it's rippling with hearty flavor?"

As this story illustrates, children *do* learn from commercials. What parent hasn't listened to a child repeat every word of dialog or sing perfectly a product jingle? But might they learn other things besides product information? Many child development scholars, as well as communication experts, believe it is not only possible but likely that children get important cues from TV about the process of socialization (learning what roles and behaviors are acceptable in our society).

Other articles have described the various images of women in advertising. Now, as concerned Christians in a secular society, we need to consider more fully this learning process in children.

Writers, producers and broadcasters don't intend to teach boys and girls appropriate ways to dress and act, or which jobs are suitable for them, but youngsters have an innate curiosity which impels them to learn in all situations. This unintentional learning is more likely to occur when the child has no firsthand experience for comparison. For instance, when Johnny sees a physician advertising aspirin, he can compare the TV role with his family doctor. However, the commercial with the rugged he-man drinking his beer with great gusto after a hard day's work on the oil rig will have more influence on Johnny's ideas about oil drillers and how they should behave since he probably doesn't have firsthand experience with oil drillers.

There are several other factors in children's development that make them especially likely to learn from commercials. Because young viewers lack critical thinking skills, they tend to accept things at face value. If women in commercials are shown most often in the home cooking and cleaning, while men are shown in the office and on the sports field, Susie may accept this as an accurate depiction of the way things are. If Mom is competent *only* when she chooses the best detergent or cold remedy, Susie might accept this as the way things should be, and the mother who doesn't fit this pattern seems to be the exception.

When we adults view commercials, we can separate the essentials from the trivial (are the women younger and better looking than the men? Are the boys playing with "action figures" while the girls are satisfied to play with dolls and be more passive in general?) But children don't make these distinctions, so commercials will probably teach them what is socially acceptable behavior as well as what cereal to buy.

As if it isn't enough that our children are not equipped to evaluate portrayals of women and men, the very consistency of these stereotypes in TV commercials reinforces what youngsters believe about their place in society.

How can we neutralize this kind of influence on our children? Here are just a few suggestions. Remember that the key is to sit down and watch commercials as a family, so that you know specifically the messages Johnny and Susie are viewing. Your efforts need to be ongoing rather than a few offhand comments.

### 1. *Help your children understand that commercials are not real.*

Talk about special effects and production techniques. Occasional magazine articles and TV specials such as "The Making of Star Wars" will show how these effects are achieved.

If you have a movie or video camera, work with the child in creating interesting shots and effects. Use stop action photography; get double exposures with black and white negatives or slides. Photography manuals will have many suggestions.

Helping your daughter or son recognize that the people in commercials are just actors doing their jobs can also get across the concept that commercials are not reality. If you see Don Johnson in a Pepsi commercial, look at a few minutes of "Miami Vice" and discuss the different roles he



## • Women Worldwide

• The access of girls and women to science and technology education and careers is the focus of a fourth international forum being held July 23-29, 1987 at The University of Michigan. For more information contact Cinda-Sue Davis, Women in Science Program, 350 Thayer St., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48109.

• "I knew I had been truly accepted by the community when I started sharing the lower status of the African woman, when I started getting bossed around," said Dawn Yoder Harms. "African women are seen as beasts of burden, as instruments of labor."

Dawn and her husband, Doug, are studying at AMBS and contemplating a future term with MCC. They returned from a three-year term in Zaire this fall.

In a recent visit to MCC, the couple said the biggest help MCC women can offer African women is to be with them and stand by them instead of taking on the higher status permitted white women. "As the base of their society, as the food producers and those who raise the children, women need to be affirmed," they commented.

• Women Living Under Muslim Laws is a network of women that aims to strengthen the

women's movement within Islamic communities and foster solidarity with international groups. The organization was formed by women from nine Muslim communities in 1984, in the wake of several instances of injustice to women: for example, a woman in Abu Dhabi was charged with adultery and sentenced to be stoned to death after delivering and feeding her child for two months. Further information about the group and its work can be obtained from

plays. Point out that Bill Cosby is paid to advertise Jello Pudding Pops as well as play the role of Dr. Heathcliff Huxtable.

## 2. *Encourage young TV viewers to compare what they see on the tube with their observations in real life.*

How do TV teachers compare with their own? How do TV moms and dads differ from theirs? How quickly are problems solved on commercials and in their own family? Discuss how often the advertised product solves the problem and people merely need to be clever enough to choose the right product.

Doing some role playing might be fun and also provide insights. Choose several commercials and have kids switch roles (the boy acts the woman's part and vice versa).

## 3. *Help your kids see that the purpose of a commercial is to sell a product.*

Explain the economic aspects of the advertising business and how broadcasters sell air time and promise to deliver certain audiences to the advertiser.

Rather than just complaining about negative aspects of TV and how our self-concept as females and males can be damaged, we can use the medium creatively. The objectionable as well as the positive commercials can be a springboard for meaningful discussions with our children—for comparing God's intention for us as women and men with the way we are shown on TV and for comparing media values with the ones we find in Scripture. In this way, we help our daughters and sons to become the people God intended them to be. ■

Lois Beck teaches French and mass media courses at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa. The Beck family of eight children consists of two biological, two adopted and four from Laos who joined the Beck home at an older age.

## Letters

• My sister who is with MCC Bolivia sent me a recent copy of your *Women's Concerns Report*. I enjoyed very much seeing a Christian organization that is concerned with the woman's view of world affairs and actively seeking the

equality of that view.

I would appreciate very much receiving your *Report* at my home and would be happy to send your suggested subscription (plus) to aid you in your efforts.  
—Beth, Bethel, Minn.

• Thank you so much for each edition of *Women's Concerns Report*. I always read them eagerly and find them quite stimulating to my own thinking and work. Recently I've been picking up issues here and there, but now I want to subscribe, since I once more have a more permanent address.

I had been receiving *Report* while in Honduras. I graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana in the spring with a master's of divinity degree. I am now in Chicago for one year doing a pastoral internship in a Puerto Rican United Church of Christ church, in the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education program before returning to Honduras to again work in leadership training. So far (after three weeks!) I am loving my time here: orientation to the city, my church and community, learning to know people, etc., and am excited about the opportunities this experience offers.

Thank you for all of your excellent work. Blessings!

—Janet M Breneman, Chicago, Ill.

## News and Verbs

• Adina Janzen has been appointed to the Mennonite Mental Health Services board. Adina is an elementary school principal in Fresno, Calif. who has recently graduated from law school, after several years of evening classwork. She has three children and five grandchildren.

• Ethel and Dale Clugston were recently appointed youth ministers for the Franklin Mennonite Conference. They have been active in youth work at Cedar Street Mennonite Church in Chambersburg, Pa.

• The Southwest Conference of the Mennonite Church has licensed Jo Ellen Johnsen as a church planter. Jo Ellen is a recent graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif.



International Solidarity Network, 34980 Combailaux (Montpellier) France.

- The **GABRIELA Network on Violence Against Women** of the Philippines has called for the removal of U.S. bases from that country even before 1991 in the wake of detection of the AIDS virus in 12 female prostitutes working in towns near the bases. The network expressed outrage that the prostitutes, rather than U.S.

servicemen, are being fingered as the "source" of the AIDS.

"In the same way that American servicemen demand VD clearance from the women, the Filipinas have the right to demand AIDS and VD clearance from the servicemen," a GABRIELA statement said.

- **Elizabeth Soto**, a staffperson of the Mennonite Board of Education in Elkhart, Ind. was the only woman to give a major

address at the Latin American Mission Consultation in Antigua, Guatemala. She urged participants, who came from 18 nations, not to fall into the error of being the 'silent in the land' but to shout on behalf of justice for the poor.

Soto also led a discussion group for the two dozen women at the consultation. Participants noted how their roles are changing. In Honduras, for example, **Lourdes Alvarado** will

soon become the first woman ordained as a full pastor of a Mennonite church.

The consultation was funded primarily by Mennonite World Conference, MCC and mission boards active in Latin America.

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- Former English teacher and librarian **Elizabeth Stauffer** took up her new duties as editor of *Gospel Evangel*, a periodical of the Indiana-Michigan Conference of the Mennonite Church, in June. She is an active member and elder at Bonneyville (Ind.) Mennonite Church.
  - **Herald Press** is publishing a manual on how to develop a house church. Author **Lois Barrett** drew on her 15 years' experience in house churches, small groups and intentional communities to write *Building The House Church*.
  - **Cynthia Wedel**, the first woman to hold the presidency of both the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, died August 24 in Alexandria, Va. The prominent Episcopal laywoman was a psychologist by profession, with a doctorate from George Washington University.
  - **Pat Swartzendruber** has been named Church Relations Director of the Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart, Ind. Pat and her staff are responsible for communicating the board's work to the constituency and for raising the funds necessary to carry it out.
  - **Janet Porzelius** is a new wellness educator for Mennonite Mutual Aid, where she will focus on wellness for children. She joins MMA's wellness director **Ann Raber**. Janet has a variety of teaching and camp counseling experience with children of many ages.
  - "Tensions that May Undo Us" was the theme of a recent **Business and Professional Women's** gathering in Lancaster, Pa. The Nov. 1 event featured speakers **Ada Hallman**, a nursing home administrator; **Mary Lou Houser**, an artist and teacher; **Carl Frey**, a counselor; and **Mary Jane Fox**, who teaches in the social work department at Eastern Mennonite College. The Business and Professional Women program is a new undertaking of the Women's Missionary Service Commission of the Mennonite Church.
  - Succeeding **Muriel Thiessen Stackley** as news service editor of the General Conference Mennonite Church is **Carla M. Reimer**. Muriel was named editor of *The Mennonite* last summer. Carla, a 1984 graduate of Bethel College in North Newton, Kans., had been director of public information at Bethel Deaconess Hospital in Newton.
  - **Ruby Schmitt** is serving as acting executive director of MCC Ontario for a five-month period ending Jan. 31, 1987 while executive director Ray Schlegel is on study leave.
  - **Florence Driedger** of Regina, Sask. was elected vice president of the General Conference Mennonite Church at its 44th triennial sessions in July. Other women who were elected to board posts in the General Conference Mennonite Church include: **Anna K. Juhnke**, North Newton, Kan., General Board; **Marlene Suter**, Markham, Ill, Division of Administration; **Lois T. Preheim**, Aurora, Neb., **Elaine S. Rich**, Bluffton, Ohio and **Ardys Becker**, Richmond, B.C., Commission on Education; **Viola Ediger**, Regina, Sask. and **Maryanne Boschman**, Abbotsford, B.C., Commission on Overseas Mission; **Marjorie Ediger**, Arvada, Colo., board of Mennonite Biblical Seminary.
  - **Eleanor Loewen** of Winnipeg has been named chairperson of the Elim Bible Institute (Altona, Man.) board.
  - *Family Farmers: Stewards of the Lord's Land* is the working title of a new book edited by **LaVonne Godwin Platt**, expected to be published by the end of 1986.
  - A 1986-1987 **Resource Catalog** is now available free from the Mennonite Central Committee. The 40-page catalog describes audiovisual and printed materials about the mission of MCC, hunger, peace and justice and other topics. All audiovisuals are available for free loan; most printed materials are also free.

Some of the titles related to women's concerns include "Women and Children First: The Human Costs of the Arms Race," a 21-minute filmstrip; "Weaving Our Lives," a 27-minute slide set that tells how women of Oodi in Botswana weave tapestries that portray many aspects of their lives; "Refugee Women," a 32-minute slide set, "Overview: Development and Women," a 15-minute slide set.

For a catalog write MCC, Box M, Akron, Pa. 17501; MCC Canada, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 5K9, or your nearest MCC office.

- **Lawrence and Clarice Kratz** were ordained Sept. 14 at the Milwaukee Mennonite Fellowship, where they have shared pastoral duties since 1983. Both are graduates of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. and have studied in the Seminary Consortium of Urban Pastoral Education in Chicago.

- **Janice L. Hershberger** has been named handbook editor for the General Conference Mennonite Church, a job that she will do on a part-time basis. Hershberger also works as public relations coordinator for the Newton School District.

• **Committee on Women's Concerns News**

- **The Committee on Women's Concerns** has two new members: **Wanda Bryant** is the administrator of York Street Community Services, Inc., an outreach ministry in North Philadelphia sponsored by the Franconia Mennonite Conference. She is active in the Diamond Street Mennonite Church, where she serves as assistant director of the adult

choir and as a worship leader. She is the mother of an infant son and 8-year-old twin daughters. **Esther Epp-Tiessen** of Kitchener, Ontario served as MCC Philippines co-country representative with her husband, Dan, from 1982 to the end of 1985. The mother of two young children, Esther has recently been appointed to represent the Conference of Mennonites in Canada on the MCC Canada board. She also works part time with Project

Plowshares in Waterloo, researching the connections between militarism and underdevelopment.

- **Man-Made Famine**, a 53-minute video produced in 1986 by the New Internationalist, demonstrates how the low status of African women — as well as neglect of women by international development

agencies — has contributed to famine there

The video, along with an MCC-prepared study and discussion guide, is now available from the MCC Resource Library, Box M, Akron, Pa. 17501; (717) 859-1151 and from MCC Alberta, 76 Skyline Crescent N.E., Calgary, Alberta T2K 5X7; (403) 275-6935.

- **Manitoba Telephone System** has joined Bell Canada, B.C. Tel, Maritime Tel and New Brunswick Telephone in blocking access to pornographic 900 numbers in the United States.

- **Walter and Karen Enns** were installed as pastor couple of Westview Community Church in Grassy Lake, Alberta in June. Both are from Winnipeg and both have recently completed studies at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, Calif.

- **New women faculty** at Messiah College in Grantham, Ohio include **Rhonda Jacobsen**, psychology instructor; **Mary Neagley**, instructor in speech communication; and **Raeann Hamon**, assistant professor of family studies.

- In Johannesburg, Anglican archbishop **Desmond Tutu** said that the image of God is not limited to one sex. Speaking out of his experience of racial injustice, Tutu said that "the fullest possible expression of the divine image is man and woman together."

- The eighth Women in Ministry conference was held Oct. 24-25 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. Through a series of three worship services, the 64 participants reflected on the themes of silence, whispering and shouting: the silence and freedom from busyness needed to hear God's voice; the whispering of women as they quietly encourage and nurture one another; the shouting of the good news through action. AMBS faculty member **June Alliman Yoder** delivered the message at each of the creative and very lively worship services. **Charlotte Holsopple Glick**, co-pastor of Waterford Mennonite Church, served as worship leader and AMBS student **Cynthia Neufeld** led the music.

Women who served on this year's planning committee included: **Janet Brown**, chair, **LaJane Yoder**, registration, **Ellie Gerig**, worship and program, **Dorothy Kratz**, publicity, **Marlene Kropf** and **Mary Swartley**, workshops, **Alice Ruth Ramseyer**, treasurer, and **Mary Kauffman-Kennel**, hospitality.

- November 28 and 29 were declared **International Days Against War Toys** by the War Toys Campaign of Norwich, Conn. Groups around the world held vigils and public meetings, leafletted shoppers and sponsored other activities to show their outrage over the commercial militarization of children. Sales of war toys have exploded some 600 percent in the past three years. Total sales of toy guns, war toys and war games are expected to reach \$1.3 billion this year. Literature and resource materials can be obtained from War Toys Campaign, Box 1093, Norwich, Conn. 06360; (203) 889-5337.

*REPORT* is published bimonthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committee strives to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures in which men and women can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in *Report* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committee

on Women's Concerns.

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